

Report on Pablo Reservoir (Lake County) Montana.

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September 8, 1936.

The water was low in Pablo Reservoir when checked on September 6th. However, even with low water this lake basin is an excellent duck and goose feeding ground because of the abundance of water spikerush (Eleocharis acicularis) which grows in the shoal water and makes a velvety green carpet over all the exposed mud flats. This plant and the small pondweed (Potamogeton pusillus), which is common in the water, make up the flora of the lake proper. Small isolated ponds on the same flat but with a more permanent water level held an abundance of sago, redhead grass, small pondweed, water weed, and water milfoil while the everpresent water spikerush covered the steep mud banks. A few small beds of Marselia here clung to the water's edge and some duck millet (Echinochloa) mingled with the salt grass, dock, and pigweeds on the higher ground.

A few seepage ponds below the fill accomodated a fair stand of all the aquatics mentioned above as well as a dense growth of small duck weed (Lemna minor) and some coontail (Ceratophyllum). Spikerush again appeared at the water's edge and with it were scattered a few plants of the duck potato. A border of common spikerush led back to the high water line which was marked by marsh marigold (Bidens), loosestrife, smartweed, and sedge (Carex). One pond was densely fringed with cattail.

About 600 geese, some 2000 ducks, and a few shorebirds were present. All of the birds were quite tame but the geese especially were almost unmindfull of our presence and continued to feed on the fruiting water spikerush which completely covered the extensive flats. Reports have it that these geese have been on Pablo since early spring.

Recommendations.

Pablo Reservoir is the best goose feeding ground on any refuge in western Montana and there is plenty of food available for ducks as well. Its value as a waterfowl nesting ground would be greatly increased if stock and the auto-moving public were fenced out and fencing, therefore, is recommended. Pablo is the best waterfowl refuge we have in this part of the State and it should be maintained and the birds protected.

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